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POEMS

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MARY BERRI CHAPMAN HANSBROUGH

a.m.P.' Jan. 28, 1933.

PREFACE

The poems included in this Volume are grouped, according to subjects, under seven separate series, namely: Floral, Nature, Psychological, Narrative, Military, Unique, and Miscellaneous.

In the psychological series each poem embodies an emotion.

The musical composers who have accomplished the greatest creations have successfully solved, for instrumental music, the psychological problem which it is my intention to solve in the poetic art.

When Beethoven's or Wagner's compositions are played, it is scarcely possible to mistake the emotion which the composer desired his music to inspire. The listener *feels* with the music, grave or gay; he is stimulated by the glamour of romance or passion, according to the emotion embodied in the music; yet the *composer does not* tell his listeners what *life-experience of his own* led him to feel as he did when he composed the sonata, or minuet, or hymn, or song. His expression is, to this extent, *impersonal*, and, for this very reason, becomes more generally personal,—personal, in fact, to every listener.

I have desired to create poems not following the technical forms of music at all, but following a principle which may be outlined briefly as follows:

Poetry without plot.

Poetry without the use of pronouns indicating sex.

Poetry, without defined limitations of time or place, whose stage is the human soul, and whose drama is the tragedy, comedy, or melodrama of mere emotion.

Poetry, so to speak, felt aloud.

A series of short creations, in form, lyrics, or blank verse, or rhymed verse, each incarnating some sorrow or joy which shall awaken the sympathy of the reader, leaving him to adapt *his own life-experience* as plot to the emotional appeal.

I have also attempted to set each thought or emotion in a rhythmic technical form that shall prove harmonious. "Exultation" has not been attempted in the "tempo" of a funeral march, nor has a prayer been tortured to fit the rhythm of a waltz.

Having outlined the rule briefly, let me confess an occasional exception, a liberty taken with this form, after deliberation, with the desire to avoid monotony in a rather extensive collection.

Among the miscellaneous poems, grouped according to their individualities, my attempt has been to conform the poetic body to the spirit of the poem, in the hope of avoiding contortionistic effects. The "Wild White Violet" has not been celebrated in forty stanzas, nor has "A Sigh" been prolonged during three pages and a half of conventional verse.

M. B. C. HANSBROUGH.

CONTENTS

Floral

PAGE

Water-Lilies 1
The Dream 2
An Indian Pipe, or Monotropa Uniflora 3
Resurrection 4
The Bluets 5
Artifice 6
Everlasting 7
Survival 8
The "Rose of Hell" 9
To an X-Ray Photograph of a Red Rose 10
The Guardian Angel 11
Leaf and Flower 12
The Wild White Violet 13
A Laggard Rose 14
Mexican Vegetable Lace, or Resurrection Plant . . 16
Hopeless 18
Nepenthe 19
The Dandelion Miner 113

Nature

The Test 20
The Humming-Bird 21
The Icicle 22
Blackbirds 23
In Autumn 24
The Sea 25
His Benedictions 26
A Trip Abroad 27
The Ruts along the Road 28
A Pastoral 29
Nature and Love 30

PAGE

Indian Summer 31
Spring 32
The Return Drive 33
Entre Nous 34

Psychological

Tryst 35
Laziness 36
Thankfulness 37
Protestation 38
Love 39
Exultation 41
Repression 42
Happiness 43
Mirth 44
Fancy 45
Ecstasy 47
Concealment 48
Loneliness 49
Secrecy 50
Lack 51
Abandon 52
Helplessness 53
Cheerfulness 54
Satisfied 55
The Smile 56
Recklessness 57
Guilt 58
Forgiveness 59
Mediation 60
Second Love 61
Disappointment 63
Murder 64
Love's Suicide 65
Homesickness 66
Pleading 67
Desolation 68
Madness 69
Incompetence 70
Ambition 71
Hate 72
Estrangement 73

	PAGE
Unmated	74
Lost	75
Bereavement	76
Grief	77
Resting	78
Faith	79

Narrative

Friendship	80
Fisk	81
A Sinner's Heaven	82
Not for Sale	83
To a Modern Thomas	86
The Doll	87
The Slave who was King	88
Mundane	89

Military Narrative

A Hero's Confession	90
A Mother	92
The Village Coward	94
His Views	95
Mrs. Murphy at Camp	97
Peace	99
A Hero	100
Our Answer to Spain	102
The Return from Manila	103
"Bunkie" Jim	104

Unique

Deformed	106
Étude Unique	107
Magic	108
City Dwellers	109
The Human	111
The Lamp	114
The Prayer	115

Miscellaneous

The Lion Tamer	116
To an Old Russian Iron Treasure Chest	117
One Comfort	118

	PAGE
At Sleeping	120
The Victor	121
The Firefly	122
The Song of Youth	124
To H. H.	125
A Mother Song	126
The Tool	127
Childless	128
At Twilight	130
The Veil	131
A Fantasy in Two Phases	133
Opportunity	134
The Two Chariots	136
The Sleeping Child	138
Elaine	139
The Song of the Sage	140
A Message	141
The Art of Living	142
The Death of the First-Born	143
Terpsichore	145
A Minstrel's Lay	146
The Mummy	148
To my Friends	150
Sweetheart	151
A Drinking Song	152
Circe	153

WATER-LILIES

AS we turn out the lamp in a room
  Where we once have been glad,
As the passing of light from the day
  To the night that is sad,
As the folding of trinkets once dear,
  And the locking the chamber of death,
So it is with the hearts that are brave
  After joy's failing breath.

Be it friendship, or passion, or love,
  Or the tender affection of years.
There is always a look like a key
  To a closet of tears,
A look in the eyes of the brave
  Like a pond-lily, passionless, fair,
And bright, as the blossom whose root
  Knows a depth like despair.

THE DREAM

IN a room wreathed 'round with roses
  I lay as the dawning broke,
But the wall-paper rose was scentless,
  And the dream rose died when I woke,
While a poniard pain of the spirit
  Wrought a sense of loss, inborn;
Oh, sleep, most perfect of roses!
  Oh, waking life, thou thorn!

AN INDIAN PIPE, OR MONOTROPA UNIFLORA

SO colorless, fragile, I fancied
'T was the incarnate spirit of bloom!
Or a snow-crystal fallen in winter
Preserved by the forest's cool gloom,
Or a dryad's ethereal being
Denuded of garlands of green!
I bent and but breathed on this wonder,
This presence of exquisite mien,
And raised eager fingers to grasp it,
Alas! Fragile magic's delight!
It withered—my selfish desire
Profaned it, as blight!
And there in its stead, seemed the spirit
Of my first little love, who is dead,
And a mystery solved to my vision,
And sobbing, I humbled my head.

RESURRECTION

TO-DAY a rose, to-morrow withered bloom!
Grieve not, fair flower, at your early doom.
Immortal in my memory's garden close
I 'll resurrect your lovely spirit, rose,
You shall not die, nor ever hope to rise
And live again,—*I'll* be your Paradise!

THE BLUETS

WIDE wonder is their heritage,
And infinite surprise,
Step-sisters of the heavenly stars,
Twin-hue of happy skies ;
Theirs the first impulse of the spring,
The bluets' eager offering.

ARTIFICE

SHE is like a flower, yet she seems to be
Something less than floral,
Lacking sympathy;
Eyes *almost* like dewdrops,
Lips suggesting rose,
Throat, a rival lily,
When it palest grows.

Like unto a flower *lacking a perfume*,
As she bows and blushes,
Like a wordless tune;
Soulless, but alluring,
'T is the pretty power
Of an unenduring
Artificial flower!

EVERLASTING

A LITTLE flower I love
  Is like my love for you—
Too pale for passion it may be,
  Yet pure as ever grew;
Its starry buds are reticent,
  Reluctant to disclose
Save by slow, sunny, wooing days
  The secret that it knows,—
The golden-hearted secret hid
Beneath a snowy coverlid.

It comes mid-time of Summer
  And does not pass away;
It has no perfume save the thoughts
  It nurtures day by day;
Once plucked, it needs no foster dews
  To keep its life and bloom:
Through Fall and Winter still it blows
  Above the Summer's tomb—
This little flower I love—that grew
To symbolize my love for you.

Though time may dim its purity,
  Its leaves grow dull as rust,
It will not molder or decay
  Nor crumble into dust;
And when the Spring again holds sway,
Or Summer makes her bright display—
Still pale, but faithfully, it shows
No homage to the reigning rose,
Nor will it lay its spirit down
To perish with her falling crown.
It scorns all seasons—for it grew
To symbolize my love for you!

SURVIVAL

AS from a rose the first fair petal falls,
So from youth's heart the first surrender yields,
And, oh, the wonder, as the fearless thing
Looks out on love and dreads no sorrowing,
While hours like days, and days like years, shall all
Bring petal after petal to its fall,
While pains, like stinging bees, molest its lip,
And drain its fragrant breathing, sip on sip,
Till, beggared of all glory—all its crown
Of pearl or ruby—it at last flings down
Its life's surrender still a sweet surprise
Where (flesh and blood) its red and whiteness dies ;
Yet, as in memory lives the rose in me,
So souls in God survive eternity.

THE "ROSE OF HELL"

(A flower found in Central America in the vicinity of Antigua, near the crater of the volcano of Fuego. It is very beautiful but deadly poisonous. E. C. Downey of Indiana brought several specimens for donation to our universities).

THEY say—on a vast volcano
  In a tropic climate grows,
Round the lava-steep of its crater,
  A lurid and lovely rose;
A wild and wanton beauty,
  Of the hue of vivid fire,
With a heart of quickened crimson
  That challenges desire;
But pluck it not,—there is poison
  In its pulsing petals' swell,
This lofty and silent Circe,
  Whose name is the "Rose of Hell."

Ah! Know ye a vast volcano,
  In our milder temperate zone,
An altar of evil passions,
  To wanton pilgrims known,
Around whose flames the beauty
  Of siren souls is bright,
The hectic human roses
  That blossom day and night;
Beware—as of that rose-Circe,
  Who hides her hate with a spell,
These fatal feminine flowers,
  That lure like the "Rose of Hell."

TO AN X-RAY PHOTOGRAPH OF A RED ROSE

(Taken by F. Boteler in the laboratory of Alexander Graham Bell, Washington, D. C.)

SPIRIT of loveliness, at last we see,
Between the rose's petals and perfume
The link which weds the impulse with the bloom,
The thought that prompts thy floral poetry.

Like an illumined lamp, lit by the sun,
Within a shade of rose-silk petals glowing,
Out of the night beneath the grasses growing,
Linking the longing earth and air in one.

This is the ardor of thy morning blushes;
This is the essence of thy sunset splendor;
Here is the secret of thy silent, tender,
Music-like motive in a key of bloom.

This shadow-graphic memory of thy glory,
Crystallization of thy June-tide story,
Seems like a dream of youth caught from the hoary
Meshes of memory and the eternal tomb.

Could we a kiss's portrait paint in pleasure,
Could we but frame its passion and desire;
Luring its likeness to a luminous fire,—
So should we see love's loftiest, lavish treasure.

So must our minds appear, could we but see
Thoughts that behind the blooming actions start;
So must the picture of the pure in heart
Look to the larger sight of Deity.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

WHY droop, wee, dainty lily-bell?
Your shy eyes look so blue
'T would seem that Heaven dyed them
When dipping them in dew.

The other flowerets gaze on high,
But I look down instead,—
The angels need me not so much
As one above whose bed
I grow—and reach root-fingers deep—
That he may dream of me, in sleep.

LEAF AND FLOWER

A LEAF bewailed that it might never be
A flower, to bloom, and rule, by sweet perfume,
As by a scepter, all the trembling air!
Ah, petal-silk's fair, fragrant tyranny!
In garden close, or by the thoroughfare,
Queen of the world's best seasons, happy bloom,
"Why was I born a leaf, so plain and bare!"

Then came, in time's most all-deliberate way,
The dawning of a great rejoicing day.
A royal pageant swept the earth and bore
Its pennants and its music on before
One high enthroned, the hero of the whole;
Standing—a King of Kings—while round him rang
The shouts that from men's throats, as trumpets, sprang.

They did him homage, wept for joy of him,
And round him as a sea the people rolled,
All pulses thrilling, leaping, and behold,
They toss beneath the horses' hoofs fair flowers,
That fall and fade, as shining drops from showers,
While, on the brow of triumph, there is seen
The leaf!—a laurel of immortal green!

THE WILD WHITE VIOLET

AH, little shy white violet,
  What have you seen to fright
Your tiny frame, all trembling,
  Your petal-cheeks so white?

Did bold bright sunbeams clasp and kiss
  Or romping breeze embrace
Your slenderness, unsought, unbid,
Or is it that you woke to find
  This glen so strange a place?

A dewy tear is on your cheek,
  You shrink beneath the green,—
The hooting owl, the long, dark night,—
  What is it you have seen?

The flashing storm, the wailing wind,
  What wrought you such distress?
Give me your tender confidence,
  Ah, trust me, and confess!

She breathed a whisper like perfume,
  Drooped on her emerald blade,—
"I really have no cause," she said,
  "I simply am afraid.

"The world is, oh, so beautiful
  And great,—I love it all;
I would not wish *it* otherwise,
  'T is *I* that am *too small!*"

A LAGGARD ROSE

SWEET rose, out of season,
  Blooming all alone,
Jostled by the breezes
  Bold and boisterous grown,
Quivering beneath the chill
  Of the frost's sharp tongue,
Sadder than the leafless boughs
  Tossing, writhing, wrung;
Sadder than the sunset sky
  Gray, and blue, and gold;
Sadder than the fallen leaves
  Dry, and drear, and cold;
Sadder, little pallid face,
  Than the budless gloom;
Sad, since sadly out of place,
  Comes your fragrant bloom!

Sweet rose, out of season,
  Who would weep to see,
In the barren garden,
  Such a luxury?
Cheek of pearly satin,
  Sculptured petal curled,
Silken stem, and verdant leaf,—
  Where, in all the world,
Blooms a fairer emblem,
  Breathes a perfume up,
Sweeter than the brewing
  Of your perfect cup?
Rich is any moment,
  Regal any hour

Blessed with such a blossom,
  Crowned with such a flower;
Beauty has no season,
  Joy perennial grows—
God has sent this message
  By a lovely laggard rose!

MEXICAN VEGETABLE LACE, OR RESURRECTION PLANT

IN the dreary desert lands,
In the shifting, sifting sands,
Where the cactus guards its blossom
With a poniard thorn;
And the yucca lifts on high
To the heated, cloudless sky
Arms of brawny, stunted brown;
Where the very creeping things,
Armed and mailed with horns and stings,
Strive with sand storms, sweeping furies,
Cutting through the air like steel;
Here a little plant is found
Closely clinging to the ground,
All unarmed among the armies
Thorny-mailed and horny-crowned.
Time indefinite it lies
Parched and lifeless 'neath the skies,
Whence no balm of moisture falls,
Till it crumbles at a touch;
And the Spanish fathers say,
Though it almost waste away,
"Quench its thirst, and it will rise
LIVING, from the crumbling clay."
'T is no superstitious claim
For this shrub of holy name,
"Resurrection Plant"—strange sign
Of a principle divine,
Hope's incarnate symbol placed
In a hopeless withered waste!

From the dreary desert lands,
From the shifting, sifting sands.
I have sent thee, my beloved,
As an amulet,
Such a plant to tell thee, dear,
That my love is ever near,
Though my soul be sad and silent,
Dead, as though, for many a day,
Thou art with me on my way;
Deem me dead, or dream me fickle,
In the desert separation,
I am exiled, parched by pain,
Loving, waiting till the rain
Of thy tears of precious pity
Quickens me to life again!

HOPELESS

A ROSE that bloomed in the tropics,
  A red and flaming rose,
Who wafted her fragrant kisses
  With impulse's lavish throes,
Cast all her utmost of petals
  And perfume, hopeless, down,—
Nor dreamed, in her lonely longing,
  That beneath an iceberg's crown
Far north, in its glacial bosom,
  Its heart so chill and lone,
A prism-rose reflected
  The passion of her own!

NEPENTHE

(To Wm. R. Smith of the Botanic Gardens, Washington, D. C.)

I KNOW a plant,—half foliage, half flower,—
That brews a beverage which scents the air
With sweet and tempting breath,—insects, beware!
Beware this inn which hangs a fragrant sign
Upon the breeze—it holds enchanted power;
Its doors are open, and its flow of wine
Lures wingèd mariners from seas of air.
Week-day or Sabbath, from the thoroughfare
Aërial, they, thirsting, press in line
Along the narrow, emerald, arching hall,
Where this plant-Circe drugs them one and all,
Her little wingèd guests; ah, lotus draught,
They sail no more who once thy nectar quaffed!
Who pauses here shall never leave the host
Save as a small intoxicated ghost!

THE TEST

MEN marveled that this tree should fall,
The tallest, fairest of them all,
But having fallen low, no art
Concealed from view its hollow heart.
Fair weather favors such as these,
Storms test the core of men and trees.

THE HUMMING-BIRD

A PALPITATING ecstasy,
  A flying prism's gleam,
A little perfume-drunkard
  At an inn of floral brews,
Tipler-aërial, exquisite,
  And connoisseur of dews;
Child of the rainbow's heritage,
  An emerald's quickened hue;
Spirit of sapphire, ruby-rose,
  Animate-opal, through
Warmed with the sun's kiss, feathered bloom,
  Winged-coquetry, swift, quivering thing;
Bird-sister to the butterfly,
  Brother of bees, without a sting!
Kissing the floral tinted lips,
  You drank their hues and dyed your throat,
Then hurried, humming gaily, home
  In elfish eagerness to gloat
O'er conquests of the season's fair
And vanquished leagues of racing air!

THE ICICLE

AN icy sculpture by an artist cold,
Cut in a quaint, unconscious purity,
A fragile, naked loveliness, not bold,
But clinging shyly, in a shadow's fold,
Like certain souls decreed by nature's will
To live unfeeling in a placid chill!

Chill?—Look again—Love's sun has warmed it through,
Its heart has bloomed in rosiest Summer's hue.
Ah! burning passion, never born to stay!
It longs, it loves, and weeps its life away!

BLACKBIRDS

THE first fair fruits of Spring,
 The tossing tree-tops bear,
Are fruits that fly and sing
 Before the leaves are there;
While yet the air is chill,
 While yet the blooms delay,
When first the grass feels green,
 And skies as yet are gray,
Then, on the barren boughs,
 Behold, the blackbirds cling!
Their life and hopes are ripe,
 They lisp of spring;
And in their tiny tunes,
 The season's portrait seems
Modeled in melody,
 As in my dreams.

IN AUTUMN

THE Autumn croons in the thicket,
  The Autumn dozes in haze,
Its gaze grows wan in the heaven,
  Its heart is a crimson blaze!
Its gold is minted in asters,
  Or nods in a floral plume,
In the sun-burned cheek of the maidens,
  In the ripened peach's bloom.

In the flame that flares on the hearthstone,
  In the mellow of harvest moons,
In the colder yellow of sunsets,
  Or the corn-field's afternoons;
And in hearts that lean together
  And dream in a wordless pain
Of youthful Spring's first kisses,
  And of ardent Summer's reign!

Ah, love that alters its seasons
  As this changeful world does too,
Will you keep our tryst in friendship
  As the years and the seasons do?
Will you closer cling in our Autumn
  Than ever in early days,
Though the frost-blades murder our kisses
  And the snow-storms blind our gaze?
When the chill is at the heart's door
  And the Winter of death draws near,
Shall we warm our hearts at the hearth-flame
  Of Faith, and be hale and cheer?

THE SEA

MOUNTAINS of motion
Sculptured in moments,
Carved by the wind's cunning touch,
Lipless, yet eloquent,
Speechless, yet voicing,
Terrible, restless,
With wail or rejoicing,—
Poor our portrayal of such!

Hateless and loveless,
Loved and yet hated,
Sky-like sea, liquid and fair,
Swept by the fragile fin;
Bird-like the fishes,
Cloud-like the foam-crests,
Sailed by man's wishes
As planets sail upper air.

Strange, yet familiar sea,
Mastered by men's ships,
Monarch, yet slave to our sway;
Terrible—beautiful,
Restless, yet rest-giving,
Death-dealing, life-healing,
Live—yet not soul-living,
Infinite in wrath, finite in play.

HIS BENEDICTIONS

GOD'S Sundays are the "every-days"
  Where buttercups are bright,
Where moments marked by roundelays
  Link every shade and light;
And languid, long horizons stretch
  Wide arms to clasp the blue,
And Nature's sermons, eloquent,
  Preach GOOD, in sound and hue;
The texts are always simple truths,
  And hymns of fragrance rise
From floral lips, or lisping leaves,
  To Heaven's listening skies;
Why go to church one seventh day?
  There are no *week* days where
His silent benedictions bless
  With every breath of air!

A TRIP ABROAD

THE spider is a fisherman
  Along a sea of air
Who spreads his little silken net
  The wingèd fish to snare.
The breezes are his drifting tides,
  The butterflies are ships
With silken sails, and honeyed freight
  Enough for lazy trips,
From floral port to port,—the bee 's
  A business route to keep,
The humming bird 's the fast express
  On this aërial deep;
The Summer 's best for sailing,
  The compass is the sun,
The garden plot is, " Paris, France,"—
  The season 's just begun!
Take passage friend,—the cost is small,
  A golden fancy 's coin,
A dream for baggage is not much,
  Beg—borrow—or purloin
These trifles—nobody will know—
  And oh,—'t is sweet to roam!
If only for that precious boon,
  The joy of getting home!

THE RUTS ALONG THE ROAD

I PLOD along a country road
Beneath my heavy, humble load,
And muse upon the foregone wheels
Whose ruts remain beneath my heels,
And deeper sink, till wind and rain
Shall beat them level as the plain.

Oh, mental ruts in which we sink,
Along the narrow way we think,
For weariness, for hopeless lack
In traveling the beaten track !
If joy comes not, nor tears of pain
To sweep the spirit free again,
Oh, shift thy burden—lift thine eyes
Above the earth, and greet the skies.
Cast off, as dust, depression's sway
And, dreaming, soar above the clay,
Till smiling on weak narrowness
The soul, exempt from bitter stress
And brave beyond dull duty's load,
Knows not the *ruts* along the road.

A PASTORAL

WEEP,—Pan is dead! The great good-hearted Pan!
Cased in its ice-bound casket lies the rill,
Its rippling pulse no longer beats aloud;
The brown and sapless mummies on the hill
Stand like the ghosts of trees, in snowy shroud;
The birds that lingered by to pipe his dirge
Lie stark and silent on the frigid ground,
While all the clouds across the heaven surge,
Clad in their darkest funeral robes, and crowned
With tears that fall and freeze upon his grave,
The while the wind faints, or revives to rave—
Pan—Pan is dead!

But hush,—across the mourning month there steals
The breath of resurrection! Can it be
That Spring is come! The Savior-Spring, who heals
And coaxes into living ecstasy
The hearts of all things; who with blessed bands
Binds Winter's dead with Summer's living hands,
And breathes a quickened breath, until the tomb
Of seasons is the seasons' fruitful womb!
Cry all ye choristers,—Behold—behold!
The miracle of nature's bible told:
Pan is not dead, for hark! He breathes again,
And rises up to rally hill and glen,
Pan is *not* dead!

NATURE AND LOVE

VEIL after veil of soft ethereal haze
Lends romance—glamour—to the literal view;
Dream after dream, in memory's happy maze,
Enfolds my spirit as I gaze on you,
Dear valley, with the vast yet tender breast,
Wide valley, of the calm and regal rest!

Veil after veil of soft ethereal haze
Lends romance—glamour—to the literal view;
Dream after dream, in love's mysterious maze
Enfolds my spirit as I gaze on you,
Dear eyes, whose depth and breadth of tender hue
Speak to my spirit—as this valley's view!

INDIAN SUMMER

I KNOW not if you think of me—
I only know
I hear in dreams your dear demands,
I clasp the rapture of your hands,
While seems to glow
A flower of joy I deemed was dead,
Arisen from memories whose deep roots
Reach down the years of long ago,
And from old hopes new sap doth flow
To nourish Love's autumnal fruits!

SPRING

THE earth and the air's sweet frenzy
Of fragrance and wings,
The flutter of anticipation
In gay green things!

The freshness of freedom and beauty
That recks not of pain,
The wealth of the spendthrift, to lavish
Exacting no gain!

The wild willful gladness of doing's
Unreasoning power,
The madness of sensuous rapture,
The love of the hour!

Oh, Spring, reincarnate, eternal
Survivor of death!
In thee is my love's resurrection,
My youth's reborn breath!

THE RETURN DRIVE

WE scatter dust along the road,—
Gold dust, as lords of golden days,
In driving through the countryside,
Gold coins scattered round their ways,
And humble folk stretched open palms,
As wild flowers for our dusty alms!

The fox-grass tosses tasseled caps
With silver, silken sheen,
A mute "God-speed," along our route,—
In fancy I can hear their shout;
The grain its green obeisance makes,
The waters wave us from the lakes,—
I turning wave my hand, to say
To these sweet dwellers on our way,
"Farewell, dear grass, dear grain, fair lake,
Another leave of you we take
And of another day."

ENTRE NOUS

I KNOW a secret—see two trees
Stand side by side, nod pleasantries,
And seem to live as though apart;
But hush,—a Dryad, wise in art,
Has whispered that below the ground
Their secret passion's proof is found;
The world sees how aloof each stands—
Their hidden roots clasp clinging hands.

TRYST

THY spirit, like a Romeo, climbs up my thoughts
to-night,
And clasps my soul, and shares my dreams, and fills me
with delight;
While one who holds my hands this hour seems far
away, tho' close to me,
And thou—so far away—hast power so near to be !

I wonder if my heart, which leaned from out my
bosom's casement called ;
Or if *thy* yearning brought thee here, who came so far to
be so near !
To make a daytime of my night, a dream more vivid
than my sight,
And joys impossible—alas ! by some sweet strangeness,
come to pass.

LAZINESS

MY comfort yawns and stretches, and is languid,
The heat of noon is in my sluggish pulses;
I dream in waking and awake, yet slumber,
Like some serenely slender, drooping flower
O'er heavy with the sweet mood of its perfume ;
The droning bees draw near me in my nodding.
Drugged, drunk with breezes, drowsy with warm sunshine
My soul swings moored, as an æolian instrument
That yields but broken bars of rhymeless rhythm,
Recording whispers, not full-voiced emotion,
For languor lays its mute upon my heart-strings;
I glimpse the scene between down-drooping eyelids:
The blue is brilliant and the green soft shaded,
And feathered lovers flit through leaves that shelter,
Where robins and ripe cherries bless the boughs,
And songs, luxurious sounds, like fruits fall downward
To feed the pampered appetite of ears
Whose hearing seems to taste,—for magic, blending
My senses all in one, and that one sated,
Gives glamour to the soul and to the season.
Oh, Circe, had you ever such enchanted
Relaxing luxury of subtle power,
I had been utter yours, who am Summer's !
Ripened with plenty, I am lost in pleasure !

THANKFULNESS

LIKE visible music is your gaze to mine,
  A radiant nectar which my vision quaffs ;
If brown or blue the source that blesses me
I cannot tell—their look alone I see,
  For while our souls embrace, my sad world laughs !

You clasp my hand,—touch mingles touch, and rests
  As peaceful as if heart to heart we pressed;
Our fingers kiss ; our palms, caressing, fold
A secret joy,—a dream in sleeping told;
  Ah, need we speak when silence is so blessed ?

Shall I be sad that I have known you, dear,
  Although too late to claim love's utmost bliss ?
Does earth despair that all the heaven it sees
It may not claim ? Ah, no, such ecstasies
  As may be mine are sweet,—thank God for this !

And in the moment's union of our hands,
  The little we in common hold by right,
By right of sympathy, the while it cling,
My hand to thine, despite this wedding ring,
  We are that moment one, in God's good sight.

PROTESTATION

WHY, when you look at me, dear eyes,
Do I forget life's lesser creeds?
Your look,—ah, it delights me so,
My feelings sing, my sight exults,
I have no other thoughts or needs!
Oh, sad, sweet eyes, that seem to know
Through what harsh wilderness of woe
My soul has striven to arise,
To meet the blessing of your eyes!

But when my heart rejoices most
One wild regret throbs bitter pain,
And tearless sorrow swells a sea
Of mighty misery in me;
Ah,—that much more we may not be
Than just a glance, a smile, a word
To one another! Ideal—dream—
Dear hope, long sought—forever lost!
Is this my crowning cross, my Fate,
To meet you,—love you, dear,—too late?

LOVE

IF, for my sake, you shall forego
One evil thought;
Or by recalling me
If in your memory
One joy is wrought,
When I am journeying, my dear,
In toil or rest,
Know I shall be content,
Accursed or blessed !

If, for my sake, though I were dead,
One kindly deed
Springs from your source to bless
Some barren soul's distress—
Fulfils one need,—
In these things I inspire in you
My soul shall rise
Content, nor ask of Heaven
More Paradise.

But, if to think of me is pain
And bitter tears—
If I dishearten—cast
Upon your soul the blast
Of grief that sears,—
Were I the damned of deepest hell
My soul should know
A greater pang of grief,
A wilder woe.

Remember then this charge
  In all you do:
My trust all tremblingly,
All undissemblingly,
  Is left with you;
Oh, wear me proudly,—love and live!
  Rejoice in breath!
You are my heaven or hell,
  My life or death.

EXULTATION

LIGHT as a zephyr,
Bright as a flame,
Swift and sweet as a playful kiss—
This is the thrill of the touch of Spring,
Blossoming bliss!

Hope in the heart
And faith in the eyes,
Mirth, and the innocent voice of truth,
Love on the quivering lips of life,
Happiness—Youth!

Sunshine and perfume,
Flowers and birds,
Music of sighs on a maiden's breath;
Butterflies—blue heavens—what is death?
Only the womb of the world's rebirth!

REPRESSION

MY love for you is hushed and still,
As are the hours of quiet dark;
Your glance of velvet gleams with light,
As waking stars through sleeping night;
I lift my gaze to yours, and, where
They meet, my soul is lost in prayer.

Not all the purple wines that swell
Earth's passion-cup with rapture's brew
Could tempt my thirsting lips to taste
Such cordial, having drunk with you
The exultation and the bliss
Of such a sacred draught as this!

A fragrant lily, fair in hue,
When dawn's first innocence is bright,
Lifts not to heaven a purer dew,
A sacramental cup more white
Than my soul, when in tears arise
Love's silent toasts, from hopeless eyes.

HAPPINESS

TWO little birds in summer weather
Once lived and loved and sang together;
Spread wings at dawn and overturned
The floral bowls brimful of dew
Set for the sun to drink; then spurned
The silver draught of heaven's brew
To powder all their plumage o'er
With golden sand-baths, by the shore ;
To flit between the glow and shade
Of foliage and light, and feel
The breeze fall baffled by their wings,
Or, panting, pause by leaf-shrined springs,
Or dally on a flower's breast
Enthroned, or flutter home to nest ;
Their very eggs mere toys, their young
Mere playmates; so they, joyed, have sung,
And then,—" What then?" —why ask, when they,
They never did ! And so my lay
For simple joy, this Summer day,
Spreads eager words
And floats and sings
As though its heritage were wings,
As though its little thoughts were birds
Exulting with the cloudless skies,
That will not peep with anxious eyes
Beyond the moment's paradise.

MIRTH

BUBBLES of sound that burst in exclamation
And scatter sparkling pleasure as bright dews
On the buttercups and clovers of thought's pastures,
Bright little blooming jests or wayward weed-flowers
Break through the green in fancy's gayest meadows,
And nod until all feeling seems to dimple
In merry sympathy ! Wings applaud breezes,
And leaves nudge one another, like gay neighbors
That seem appreciative of our folly;
The sweet surprise of humble wide-eyed daisies,
The shy confiding smile of all things growing,
Which baffle Winter's chilly pessimism,
And mock December's dark agnosticism
With fresh perennial birth, and faith, unreasoning,
Confiding smilingly from moment to moment,
All confident of resurrection's Springtide,
And mischievously merry with the joke of living ;
Oh, happy Mirth, all nature is your mirror !
The duplicate reflection of your fervor,
Each new-born instant to each soul presents it
For christening, sad—gay—profound—or wicked,
Or beautiful, or ugly, as we will it.
Then let us be most generous, good god-fathers,
And give a glad dower to this pause, this fraction
Of living time ! Create it heedless, happy
And punctuate with laughter's liveliest phrases ;
Let us appoint it to a wholesome service,
A prince of clowns at the court of human moods!

FANCY

TWO tall trees stood
  In a cool, calm wood,
And waved green garlands high,
  And one was wed to the fondling wind,
And one, to the sunny sky;
But, deep in the dark of the secret earth,
  Their roots in one were grown:
Each felt with the other's fiber nerves
And they drank one sap—there were no reserves—
  Yet their union was not known;
Unknown to the world above the sod,
And recognized only by them, and God.

"Ah, why," they sighed,
As they stood in pride
  Apart, like twin souls I know,
"Must we yield ourselves to the sun and wind
  While our roots together grow?
Why, why are we wedded to separate ways
  When our hearts flow one wild flood?
Yet, ah, my fate,—too long or too brief,
I would have no other, thou sweetest grief,
  Flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood!"

Two *trees* did I say,
Stood night and day
  Apart, yet united—one?
Ah, read between where the leaves are green
  And the rhymes so rounded run,
When the roots of these trees are asunder torn,
  They both shall fade, wither, and die,

And the wind and the sun may woo in vain
  And the world may wonder *why*.
Ah, dearest thought of my life, mourn not
  Though our secret heavy grow ;
God made you mine, and my soul is thine,
  Though the world will never know!

ECSTASY

OH, the sweet thought of you,
It is youth to my soul!
I am dreaming anew,
As the lips of the bowl,
As the bee of his bloom,
Be you near, be you far,
Be it Autumn or Spring,
Ah, wherever you are,
All the thought of my thought
Turns forever to you,
Thrilling life, swelling hope,
Brimming me, as the brew
Fills the cup at the feast,—
Be you faithless and free,
In love's greatest or least,
You are my ecstasy!

CONCEALMENT

WHAT strange and melancholy power is mine!
Shall Sol convince us that his *day* is *night?*
That light is dark and that our senses lie?
Am I accursed or blessed with gifts divine,
Dear God?—I laugh—and no one knows I cry!
And even you, dear heart of my romance,
Know not I love you, tho' my spirit thrills
With your least glances, while I call you friend
And talk of politics, or drachms and pills,
Or jest with flippancy—why even I
Deceive myself at times! I laugh to tears,
Or, weeping, laugh at weeping—ah, my love,
Light of my day, dream of my night-time, know
That for your happiness I have forsworn
My own soul's birthright, and my secret lies
Woven in utmost of concealment's arts
Beyond discernment; so my days slip by,
And days to months and months to years are wed;
While my unmated, lonely love, unguessed,
Within the abysm of an actor's soul,
Longs for the all-surrendering of death,
That it may to the listening silence say
What through a lifetime was forbidden breath:
How much, how long, how utterly and true
I loved you always—though you never knew!

LONELINESS

IT comes again, the sweetness to the breeze,
The pale white passion of anemones,
The flood-tide of emotion to the stream,
The utter brightness to the sunny beam.

It comes again, the warmth about my heart,
And memories, like north-bound bird-wings, start
The resurrection flutter and desire,
That knows no height of hope, but longs for higher!

It comes again, that season when I felt
Once, long ago, your gaze like kisses melt
Upon my sight—the Spring that I adore
Has come again, but you—*you* come no more!

SECRECY

I ASKED for little, and life gave too much ;
I asked for *much*, and little was my lot.
Ah, when the tears of protest fell undried,
And smiles of hope, those flowers of the face
That breathe on life's lip fragrant happiness—
When these had faded to the ghosts of joy,
Then cried my soul, " If ' asking ' counts for naught
I 'll ask for nothing! " And behold, strange luck !
The power to gladden others, dry their tears,
To resurrect, upon their faces, smiles
Which painful, living, scarred, looked pale as death.
Ah, gentle martyrdom of self; *how sweet,*
How sad this world is, therefore let us laugh!
And, when the comedy of Ego's done,
Let silence seal the secret of a tomb,
That men shall say, "How happy was her lot!"
(Hush—keep my secret, O thou whispering wind!)
I loved one only,—one who loved me not!

LACK

THERE are flowers that have no perfume;
There are birds that have no song;
There are shrubs that have no blossoms;
There are waves that have no foam;
There are trees that know no fruitage;
There are days that feel no sun;
Nights that languish, lacking moonlight.
Hear, O heart, so weary grown:
Heart, wild heart, though thou art *loveless*,
Never deem thyself alone!

ABANDON

TIME is too short to love you all I long to ;
Grief is too little to endure for you ;
Remind me not, nor warn me it is wrong to
Adore your very presence as I do !
I seek not love's return, but just *to give*,
To yield my adoration while I live,
Nor ask, hereafter, Heaven's celestial grace ;
Give me in life the light to see your face,
In death—the blessed memory of you.

HELPLESSNESS

MY mind's a giant, tireless,
Who longs to, in his hands,
Mold, every day, a masterpiece
Till life triumphant stands
In beauty, strength, and aspiration
Deserving, love, your approbation.

My mind's a giant, who for you
Would render all life's falseness true,
All difficulties sweet, and make
All shadows bright for your dear sake;
Alas, for all my soul conceives—
Ah, bitterness that so bereaves!

The giant finds his tools too small
To serve his will—ah, thwarting thrall !
I—I, a giant—pity me
Who am a pigmy bodily!

CHEERFULNESS

IN spite of Winter, there is Spring;
  In spite of cold, the sun is warm;
Green buds upon the bare boughs cling;
  The fair days triumph over storm;
And, through the sere leaves, pink and white
Anemones proclaim delight!

In spite of living, there is love;
  In spite of waking, dreams are mine;
There is no depth but up above,
  Joy's height arises still, divine!
Estrangement, absence, death, despite—
My soul shall sing of hope's delight!

SATISFIED

ONE day with beauty—'t is a rose!
A day of fragrance and delight :
Ah, bless the day, nor curse the night
Whose darkness hoards such treasures.

My heart is in its June, its day
Of love and beauty,—'t is a rose!
Though Winter sweep its joys away,
I 'll bless the life, nor curse the death
Whose darkness hoards such treasures.

THE SMILE

THE Everbloom is a little flower
    The soul may gather any hour;
Perennial its blossom blows
In tropic vales or mountain snows,
You 'll recognize it where it grows:
As sweet as clover to the bee,
As apple blooms' perfumery,
As sweet as to the lover's lips
The kiss that trembles lingeringly,
As sweet as sunshine in chill air
The Everbloom is, everywhere!
Its root is in the heart—it grows
And blooms a smile—a spirit-rose!

RECKLESSNESS

AS gay as birds, I greet the green,
  As glad as buds, I meet the sun;
I race beside the running stream,
  My looks embrace the horizon;
I take no heed of wrinkled care,
  I laugh, and pass the fallen by,
Or shrug and hasten otherwhere—
  What matters anything but "I"?
I kiss the dimples of kind lips,
  I pluck the rose-blush of ripe youth;
I brush the bloom from every flower,
  I love my happiness—not truth,
Nor faith, nor virtue! While I live
I take—and care not what I give!

GUILT

MY creeping flesh shrinks from my soul,
My thoughts shun one another.
Why should a deed accuse its perpetrator—
The child of will rebuke the parent motive?
I blush before my self-accusing conscience;
Shame's bloodshed, on the cheeks, shows guilty scarlet
That blanches death-like, tell-tale of the murder
Within the mind; betrayal flush—red signal
Of danger, followed by a pale truce-pennant:
So do life's tides revolt against low living,
And every heart-beat pound upon the portal
Which dares not open frankly, hospitably.
Beware the ghosts of memory, oh closed closets,
Those haunting miseries that talk in sleeping,
And write their grievance on young flesh in wrinkles,
For never was there bolt secure past breaking,
Nor soul depraved beyond guilt's suffering.

FORGIVENESS

THOUGH He in Heaven forgive me for my folly
And set his whitest pledge upon my scarlet,
And teach me how to turn my saddest error
To happiest use, by bringing all grief's knowledge
To save some other soul from similar sorrows ;
Though all the angels pardon, and the devils
Of hell yield mercy, and though mortals
Grant me reprieve and ask no expiation—
O long eternity, how shall I survive you
And ever be able to forgive myself ?

MEDIATION

SOMETIMES, when, in a little flower's face,
I see the likeness of a child I know,
Or meet a human biped—hear a voice
So like a bird's its words as music flow—
Ah, then I feel how close we humans lie
To every phase of nature's imagery;
And from my mind takes form a fancy odd,—
We humans are but organs in the body of the world,
The world itself an organ in the body of our God.

SECOND LOVE

YOU do not love me? I the more will love you!
Lest what you love should fail to satisfy you,
And leave you lacking, lonely, some sad future—
Oh, but the thought of this does grieve and goad me!
I stretch my arms to Heaven protesting for you
In anxious, eager prayer! The dream of sorrow
To you is unto me a real anguish!
There is no beauty but your face exceeds it!
There is no pleasure but I claim it for you,
Nor any day for me completely perfect
Without the dawning thought of you within me;
You are my morning, noonday, and my evening,
And as my day, so are you all my night-tide,
And, short or long, forever, time is *you!*
The torture of dull absence is as nothing,
The goad of your indifference wounds me, smiling,
To suffer for you is a joy I cherish;
Hell were too little to endure for you!
Nor Heaven sufficient could I dower you with it.
Prove you less noble than my ideal deems you,
I 'll gladly sell my soul to dower your spirit!
I value not myself save as you prize me,
For I have lost *myself* in finding *you!*
Yet I have dreamed that, in some happy haven,
Some ever-blooming, quiet, congenial garden,
You loved me as I love you, and our living
Enriched all Heaven and increased earth's beauty;
Our human clay was stirred to bloom's desire.
A mutual rose of passion, pink of friendship,
Or violet of sentiment,—all equal
In loveliness, we alternately gathered;

The perfect plenty of the soul's full Summer
We plucked together, happily, contented;
Perennial loving, laughed at changeful seasons.
We mutually budded, bloomed, and ripened,
And mutually flushed and failed with Autumn,
And lingered mutually, in life's Indian Summer,
Together; So we waned, and lavish loving
Lined all the icy tomb with warmest memories
And happy faith—the faith of unreasoning flowers,
That feel their passing but forecasts returning!
Frosts fell upon our fragrance and our ardors
And sleep o'ertook our love, but death smote softly
Between twin kisses, duplicate caresses,
And mutual longings for another spring-tide,
Another life together after death.

DISAPPOINTMENT

I STRETCHED desiring hands—
My palms were smitten;
longing lingered,
And illusion left me;
I craved and snatched desire—
To be deluded !
Oh, fruit unsound at core!
Oh, sweetness tainted!
Yet still I hold it
And my sighs turn tearful.
Regrets as bitter as frost-blighted fruitage
Make all my soul to shudder and to sicken.
Oh, love—deceit! Oh, hope—supreme delusion!
Oh, life—bah! I, unhesitating, spurn you—
A devil-ridden world—a wormy apple!

MURDER

WITHOUT a blade or bullet,
  Without a thrust or blow,
Without a cry of terror,
  Or vital crimson flow;
With winning words and tender,
  With soft and melting eyes,
And lips of smiling sweetness,
  With honeyed pleasantries,
He wōn his victim's confidence,
  Profaned the soul's pure mind
With thoughts like potent poison,
  He plotted and designed,
Till, as a scourge, swept o'er it
  A malady of pain,
That hopeless of all healing
  It struggled with in vain;
Until at last they noticed,
  Who loved this soul, a change
Had come to pass within it,
  A something cold and strange
And hardened in expression,
  An emptiness of smile,
A harshness in the laughter,
  A bitterness and guile
In all its speech—but no one,
  Until Time's course is run
And life and death are ended
  And day and night are done,
No man shall know the treachery
  Or dream the fearful way
This soul lies murdered—buried
  Beneath the living clay.

LOVE'S SUICIDE

I KILLED it with my own hard hand
Though no one seems to understand,
And not a stain has traitor been
To tell the sin!

What matter whether day or night,
God only pities such a plight
As thou and I, my soul, were in
Ere this had been.

I plotted with relentless will;
I waited coldly to fulfill
Resolve's intent—then smote my heart
With fatal dart.

Ah! you of tender youthful years,
I would not fill your eyes with tears;
Could you have seen, your wounded eyes
Had bled red drops in agonies.

Cold, worldly men and women know
Within their secret souls, this blow
Which, self-inflicted, makes them so—
You—have not known.

HOMESICKNESS

THERE is a land more dear to me
  Than any over hill or sea,
More native than my native land
  And dearer far than it could be.
I wander up and down the strand
  By day or night and gaze afar
In hope that there may come to me
  Some message from across the bar.
Ah, can you never understand?
  Smile not in jest or irony—
I am an exile from that land!

I dare not dream, lest memory
  Should rob the present of all charm,
Should murder peace, and outrage, burn,
  And spread such havoc and such harm—
So utterly should overturn
The frail foundations years have wrought,
Where once so fearlessly I fought
Love's tragic conflicts for sweet pain,
Such as I shall not fight again.

But hush—ah, hush! What compensates
The wealth of all the world's estates,
What compensates a wealth of art
If I am exiled from your heart!
Ah, can you never understand—
Dear love, your heart—my native land!

PLEADING

FATE, thy claims are hard,
  Yet I grudge thee naught;
Every bitter pang
  Some rare lesson taught;
Take my faith in man,
  Take my faith in God,
Take my love, my hope, my health,
  I will kiss thy rod!
Take—and welcome—these,
  And forgive a sigh.
We will dwell at peace
  Still—my fate and I;
But of all my store,
  All my precious pelf,
Leave me, I implore,
  Faith in self!

DESOLATION

CARRY sand to the desert,
  Proffer salt to the sea,
Coals to warm the tropics,
  Ice to frigidity;
Grief to the heart that 's lonely,
  Love to the purse of gain,
Death is all that is left us,
  We who have prayed in vain!

Nay—not death for the *hopeless*,
  Only death for them
That have not tired of living,
  Or dread to live again.
Even afraid of Heaven,
  Weary of feeling, lest
Short of annihilation
  Nothing could bring them rest.

God, on thy throne of planets,
  Look far down in the dust,
And pity a soul forsaken,
  Crushed till it knows no trust!

MADNESS

A MAD man's mind is a haunted house
Where a restless thought, like a gnawing mouse,
Harasses his reason, by night or day,
While the dust of idleness muffles gray
The empty threshold; his will is spent,
And all men shrink from this tenement
Where the senses totter! The rotting wall,
With every emotion, shakes to fall,
And, as wild winds blow through a broken pane,
The wailing of impulse sounds through his brain.

INCOMPETENCE

INCOMPETENCE—the voice whose sound is song-
less,
The painful eloquence of empty effort,
The grief of ugliness whose wish is beauty,
Fair inspiration cramped by homely duty;
The bough that craves for fruit and bears but leaves,
The barren shriveled seed of regal sheaves,
A lofty impulse lacking gracious deed,
Brave hearts that, in a cause ignoble, bleed,
Or the tragi-comedy whose kings are clowns;
A willing utmost's mediocrity,
A feebleness that grasps at majesty!
An urge all impotent in consequence!
Life hopeless—death heavenless—incompetence!

AMBITION

LABORING in pain to attain—
How we dream of peace
Won with gain!
Peace and quietness from distress
That shall compensate
Weariness.

But, when labor's done, all is spun,
Garnered thriftily—
What is won?
Only striving—striving to *keep*
What, with bleeding hands,
We did reap.

HATE

ALL beauty but makes ugliness for me,
All goodness with fierce evil stirs my blood
With some perverse and irritable spite,
And, like an itching outbreak of the flesh,
A restless, writhing appetite consumes
Content in me, and leaves quick craving, raw
To chafing energy! I curse your beauty,
Smiles, frowns, your calmness, and your dimpled mirth,
Your sleeping and your waking—all your words
And all your silence! O to brand your soul,
To sear it with irrevocable sin!
A stench envelop you! A madness sap
Your sense, as leeches suck at sickly flesh!
I would evade you and you follow me,
I would pursue, and you elude pursuit.
I call on Heaven and the devil laughs,
I call on hell and heavenly angels smite me.
Oh, anguish, utter lashing agony,
Whose thongs are flames or ice alternately—
Is there in all eternity no vengeance?
How shall I end you who offend existence?
There is no cruelty sufficient cruel.
Could I consume you to appease my craving,
My very stomach would belch forth the insult!
Could I, discarnate, trample you to ashes,
Annihilation would not soothe my outrage,
If memory held one recollection of you,
Or any living mind your cherished likeness.
That once you lived—the thought would goad to raving.
Give me a coal and I 'll ignite your tresses
And use you as a torch to light my darkness,
Or warm my angry wretchedness in Hades!

ESTRANGEMENT

TO have ceased to watch the highway
 For a single friendly face,
For the eyes that understand,
For the frankly fearless hand,
And the lost hope of a smile,
And the greeting free from guile,
Nor to know why came the change
Making all familiar, strange—
All completeness incomplete,
And all sweetness bitter-sweet;
Life how long, and joy how brief!
Tears of laughter to the eyes
In what mockery arise—
Jesters at the court of grief!

UNMATED

A SILVER bloom is on the grass,
  The ripened moon hangs high,
The breezes whisper secrets where
  The little leaflets sigh;
Night glamour casts enchantment o'er
  The earth and on the sea;
There is a sadness in my soul,
  A shadow over me.

I will not weep—I will not mourn
  Though grief has bruised my breast,
And made me shrink and fear to feel
  The romance—the unrest
Of such an hour, when sentiment
  Like fragrance fills the air,
And stabs the lonely with its kiss
  As though sharp frosts were there.

But, calm with hopelessness, I stand,
  Half closed my aching eyes,
And clasp a memory to my breast,
  And dream of Paradise!
Ah, spellbound midnight, all my tears
  Are raptures, for I know
That not alone I stand tonight
  To watch the moon wax low:
My dream is with me—glad am I,
For, while I live, it cannot die!

LOST

LOST—alas, I know not where,
How or when.
Was it on the street or stair,
Late or soon?
Early morning, light of noon?
Dark of night? I went which way?
Seems to me 't was yesterday!
Ah, my God—my treasure gone!
Kings could lose no more than this;
Life were better spared—or bliss.
Lost am I, who blindly grope,
Hardly daring moan or sigh—
Lost am *I*—in losing *Hope!*

BEREAVEMENT

I TIE no crape upon my door,
    My shutters wide are thrown;
The sunbeams dance upon my floor,
  I may not weep or groan;
No friends bring offerings of love
Or sympathy—God up above,
God only knows; no flowers are sent
To perfume my soul's sacrament
With incense's sweet pervading breath.
My soul to day is dark with death,
And yet none understand 't is so;
How could they guess? why should they know?
They only see my hair turn gray,
My color pale, and, sighing, say—
  "How young some people fade."—Ah, well,
It is a private funeral!

GRIEF

PALE pain has stabbed the soul to wounded silence,
Bereft of all expression, mutely tottering—
Yet falling not; one wild hope gropes at vacancy,
While chill sweat from the brows, slow, miserably,
With scalding tears of desolation, dissolves;
Oh, barren grief! Oh, sterile desolation!
The soul's Sahara, lost to all oases!
Oh, hush of deafness in the world's loud sounding!
Oh, blight of blindness in day's sunny seeing!
A swoon that dies not, and a death yet living,
A heart, deep, buried alive—beating, but broken!

RESTING

DREAMING in the grasses
  Underneath the shade,
Would my lazy childhood
  Might not ever fade!
Heaven, as peeping downward
  Through the leafy screen,
Looks again, and brightly
  Smiles at what is seen.

Just a score of heartbeats,
  Just a breathing space,
Till my second childhood
  Brings me to this place,
Down among the grasses,
  Underneath the ground—
I shall look with floral eyes
  From my lazy mound,
Feel the season's heart throb,
  And, forgetting men,
Find an everlasting
  Childhood once again!

FAITH

AS every general his army loves,
Each brave bronzed fellow with his cap and gun,
So would he, if he could, in every one
Confide his plans, defensive or attack;
But yet he cannot, knowing wisdom's price,
For full success is utmost secrecy;
Then must the soldiers blindly all obey
Commands that lead they know not where or why.
And so I think it may be with our God,
Who generals the legions of the world.
Shall we not follow though we know not where,
Obeying laws that come as our commands,
And trust our Leader plans our victory,
Because the Infinite can *not* confide
To finites the campaign of this world's war?

FRIENDSHIP

A SWELL got off at a western town
When the eastern train came in,
And the porter winked, the conductor smiled,
As he almost stumbled over a child,
For his eyes were fixed on a sign not far
From the station, notably, "Murphy's Bar."

A stranger-swell, with a tall silk hat,
And a long, black coat and a gold-topped cane,
Came out of the Pullman palace-car,
And boldly entered at "Murphy's Bar,"
Then paused—as he met the cold blue eye
Of Murphy, alias "Fighting Nye."

The men's eyes met in a long, keen look,
And the stranger's lips, they paled and shook
As he stood. "Can you mix me a drink," he said,
"That 'll taste like Skinny Brown, Handy Ned,
And old Pat Gee?" All the open space
Between them closed, in a rough embrace,
And the noblest feelings above the sod,
Found utterance only in "Sam—by God!"

FISK

WHAT? The gambler Fisk is dead?
  "Wholesome riddance" murmurs Prue.
"Hell won't take him," Fred declares;
"Heaven?"—well, somehow, unawares,
  By some trickery he knew,
He may dodge in there; 't is said
"Fisk is Fisk—alive or dead."

Fisk—yes, really, Fisk is dead.
  That 's not much to grieve for, yet
There 's one factor not a shame
Left behind with all the blame—
  Just one thing we 'll not forget
Though the very worst be said
For old Fisk, alive or dead.

He was all men's friend in need:
  Never hand more quick to give,
Though it was so quick to take
Every penny men might stake;
  He 'd a pocket like a sieve,
And a heart as soft as bold,
Giving sympathy *and* gold!

Not a good man, yet, indeed,
Not *all* bad we must concede.
Fisk was—Fisk! A sort of curse
Which strange blessings intersperse!
And perhaps no chant or creed
Saves souls like a friend in need.

A SINNER'S HEAVEN

WHEN the chickens roost,
An' the cows come home;
When the sun gets red
In the sleepin' west;
When the shadows stretch,
An' the cricket cries,
An' the swallows circle
Acrost the skies;
Then mah restless heart,
Born, *bound* tuh roam,
Kind uv thinks uv Nance
An' uv gettin' home.

Now I ain't had much
Edycation—sure—
An' mah conscience creaks,
An' mah prayers goes lame;
An' I 've done right smart
That 'd make Nance cry;
An' I ain't done much
That I 'm swearin' by.
But when life sets low,
An' mah hair gets thin;
When mah sight grows dull,
If mah Nance goes—well—
Where there ain't no sin—
Then mah soul's last chance
Uv the heavenly dome
Will be, lovin' Nance—
She's mah home!

NOT FOR SALE

(A True Story)

NO,—love nor cash can't buy him!
Not much tuh look at? Say,
But heaps uv gold lays scattered
All roun' Gawd's earth that way;
Yas sir, four-legged an' yellah,
An' dirty an' full uv fleas,
An' a piece gone out uv his ear-flap,
An' a touch uv mange at th' knees;
But all th' samey, one Summer
When he wuz younger 'n now,
He went out north with mah brother
On a buyin' trip in th' slough,
Back in th' Big Hole country,
A tyin' up here an' there
Tuh settle a pretty bargain
Wherever they 'd stock tuh spare.
Mah brother (new tuh th' business)
Had slues uv cash tuh pay
An' put th' cash an' his shooter
Snout up, in his "schap"—this way.
'T was right smart off tuh north'uds,
He stopped—*why*, I don't know—
An' mountin' again, th' trigger
Struck somehow, an' let 'er go!
He fell, yet all the samey
He mounted an' tried tuh start,
But the blood streamed out uv his haunches
An' fluttered aroun' his heart;
Then down in th' dust a-thinkin'
Uv Lucy an' me—a whine

An' a lappin' tongue in his life-blood
Recalled this dog uv mine;
An' sez he, "Jeb, git fur the rancher,
An' drive th' mare, *you* know,"
But Jeb, he whined on his shoulder
An' did n't want tuh go.
"Git," sez he, "old felluh,
An' drive th' mare tuh Vay;"
An' then away like a bullet
He lit—with th' mare full play.
They passed a drove uv bronchos
Two mile along th' trail,
But out uv th' pack he druv her,
Like a hammer drives a nail,
An' on, out over th' prairy,
Full tilt acrost th' grass,
An' down th' grade in the cañon—
A ticklish place tuh pass;
Then up in a cloud, like ashes,
Of yellah dust an' dirt,
Before McVay's old shanty,
He headed off her spurt,
An' barked—yas, yelled, old snoozer,
'Till yuh nearly bust yuh belt
A-callin th' boys tuh notice
An tellin' 'em all yuh felt.
They seen th' bood on the saddle,
An' guessed th' trouble—well,
They clapped right onto their mustangs
An' lit out, harder 'n h—ll!
But, fast as they could travel,
That dog could travel more,
An', out uv sight, kep' barkin'
Th' good news on before;
He laid his nose on his master
Some time before McVay,

Still listenin' fur his barkin',
Brought up the boys that way.
Gawd kep' him 'live and livin'
Tuh know we took his han'
But all he 'd wind fur sayin'
Wuz, " Jeb, yuh little man—"

. . . .

Jeb, come here, son—come here, sir,
You 'd ought tuh ben a gal;
Those eyes ain't like a collie's,
But they can help corral.
Come here, Jeb, look up, sonny—
He loved my brother Jim.
There 's souls that goes two-legged
Ain't got the soul uv him."

TO A MODERN THOMAS

HE doubted God; he doubted man;
  He doubted Paradise;
He probed, dissected, and dissolved
  In scientific guise—
Reduced all hopes to protoplasms,
  Despair to indigestion,
Life to a game of enterprise,
  Or calculating question;
He doubted, being sceptical,
  All things around about
This earthly sphere—*one thing* exempt:
  Himself he did not doubt!

THE DOLL

THERE is flame in my blood—there is blood in my thought,
When I turn down the road where the river has wrought
Its ravages unto the sands;
The river that foams at the mouth with its wrath,
As the water-weeds bathe by the bank and the path
And the stepping stones struggle in file through the flood,
As to stay the strong stream with their bans!

But darker and greener the treacherous deeps,
And calmer and colder the swollen flood sweeps,
And wider and stronger it grows,
Till the shadowy shore sees its neighbor no more,
And the boat on the bank with its old battered oar
Is the last little link between brotherly strands,
And the river leaps on with wild throes.

It was here my sweet slip of a lass paused to see—
With a dolly as fair for a dolly as she
Was fair for a lassie of four—
How out of the heaven the little white clouds
Leaned over the water, till, drowned in their shrouds
Like the ghosts of themselves, in death's mirror below
They saw their souls sunken and lost in its flow;
And the dolly fell in—while my child, with a cry,
Snatching after her, slipped from the shore!

Ah, the flame in my blood and the blood in my thought,
When I turned down the road where the river has wrought
Such ravages unto the sod!
The river that foams at the mouth with its wrath,
Where the water-weeds lave their lithe lengths, from the path—
The path of my pain! Ah, what mockery!—for
On the moss at my feet there is tossed to the shore—
A *doll*—nothing more—ah, my God!

THE SLAVE WHO WAS KING

ONCE, long ago, 't is written,
  An ancient monarch brought
Back to his rich dominions
  From foreign battles fought,
And scenes of frightful pillage,
  Full many a treasure brave,
But rarest of his trophies
  Was a young and handsome slave.
Rare was the captive's beauty:
  His melancholy eyes
Were like the lurking shadow
  Where morning's splendors rise;
His form was living marble,
  His carriage graceful, free
As though he felt no bondage
  In his captivity;
For rarer than his beauty
  His voice—and, when he sang,
Upon the air's inertia
  A vital music sprang;
"'T is magical enchantment,"
  They murmured in the throng,
"For, from his throat, bloom roses
  Whose perfume is a song!"
Some sighed, or wept for rapture,
  Some shouted, mad with joy,
And some sat dumb in wonder,
  And gazed upon the boy.
The king was lost in dreaming,
  Bent low, with visage grave,
While free men cried in envy
  Of his miserable slave!

MUNDANE

DEAR God—I 'm not a lofty soul,
  I only lived and died
Along the meadow lands of life
  Upon a country side;
I tilled your soil, and every hour
  I overturned the sod,
For reckless murder of a flower
  I asked your pardon—God.
I loved, and tried to live love's laws
  And reckon, just off-hand,
I learned about the whole of life,
  But did n't understand!
I died when came my time to die,
  And from my body free
I joined the thronging elements
  Of your great unity.
But, out of place among your stars,
  I want to ask, O God,
That I may join the force that goes
  To glorify the sod;
That I may look with daisies' eyes
  Upon my boys grown men,
And hear the crickets in the grass,
  And feel the Spring again!
I 'm not so easy in the skies ;
  I 'm humble, through and through,
I 'd rather give up Paradise
  And be a drop of dew!

A HERO'S CONFESSION

WHAT medal—yes, they say it 's mine,
But *I* don't know what for!
I 'm not a soldier born, I hate
The very thought of war!
They played the band, and pinned it on,
'T was empty sort of fun—
I felt I had n't earned it, not
By anything *I'd* done.
'T was this way—we were nearly fagged,
There was n't time to think,
The enemy kept at us so
We could n't steal a wink;
We ate between our loading guns,
It seemed like fire we ate;
We drank our tears when comrades fell
And nerved ourselves with hate.

Then came an unexpected charge
Upon us from the rear;
The boys were taken by surprise—
They never ran from fear.
Our Captain dropped—and then I felt
A something in my breast
That turned me backward in my tracks,
Away from all the rest.
I felt that I could lift the world—
I yelled and cheered the men;
We made a circle to the left
And struggled back again
And held the ground. I never knew
What happened next; you see
I did n't seem to be myself,
It 's all a blank to me.

They tell me, though, I saved the day
The medal, yes, it 's fine,

But I 'd have liked to hand it back—
  It never felt like mine;
And, when they put it on, I blushed
  As shame-faced as a kid.
I 'll never *feel* I earned it—for
  I don't know *how* I did!

A MOTHER

THERE 'S a light in my smile that you miss, dear?
  Well, bear with me, best as you can;
There 's a rose that is lost to my cheek? Yes,
It is not I love you, my dear, less,
That my soul flies these signs of distress, dear,
  Remember, I am not a man.

Men bear, and grow hard with their scars—yes,
  They are sturdy and brave, like my Jack;
But we women—God help us, we fade, pale,
And falter in tears, and weakly wail
For the joys that we cherished that fail, dear,
  And the sons that will never come back!

I have not a scar nor a scratch—no,
  But my spirit must suffer the throes
Of that part of it killed in the war;—God—
God knows I am wounded and maimed—
The sod has covered my flesh and blood. Plod, dear?
  Yes, I plod and I pray, as God knows!

Yes, I pray and He lends me this crutch, dear,
  That my maimed spirit still may not lack
For support; have you guessed it is you, dear?
Your love is my crutch! But, my sweet, I fear
I cannot be healed and made whole here, since
  The grave cannot give back my Jack.

We mothers have nothing to gain, to boast—
  No laurels, no honors, no joys—
When we give to the war at its call, dear,
Our flesh and blood, give it in grief and fear
For knowing that victory brings not here—back
  To us—our babies, our boys.

Christ pity the mothers without, dear,
  Another child left in their need,

To kiss when they weep and despair, dear,
To cling and caress and to care—care
The more, as they fade in the hair, and cheek,
  And spirit!—to bind when they bleed.

Men bear and grow hard with their scars, yes,
  They are sturdy and brave like my Jack;
But we women, God help us, we fade, pale,
And falter in tears—sometimes wail—
For the joys that we cherished that fail, dear,
  And the sons that can never come back.

THE VILLAGE COWARD.

"'FRAID-CAT, 'fraid of a snake!
Hold the fence and scream;
'Fraid of the noise the toad-frogs make,
And the log across the stream!"

"'Fraid-cat, 'fraid of the dark!
Cross your heart and die
If ever you run past dead man's park—
Then break your word and cry!"

"'Fraid-cat, 'fraid of the girls!
Little Sammy Sim—
Baby-eyes, an' sissy curls—
Stick your tongue at him!"

"'Fraid-cat,"—everyone laughed
When he marched away;
Many 's the "stay-at-home" that chaffed
At Sammy Sim that day.

"'Fraid-cat, 'fraid of the girls"—
But not of blood or shell;
And the men that followed the tumbled curls
Shrank not in the fire of hell.

A volunteer for a daring deed,
A willing sacrifice,
A laughing word for his wounds that bleed,
A smile with the closing eyes,

And a shaft of marble above the sod
Is all that tells of him—
But if ever a brave boy found his God,
It 's little Sammy Sim!

I NEVER cared for singin' hymns,
  An' churches ain't my style ;
I don't much mind about my faults,
  And never did revile
Or blame the sinners over-much
  Fur dyin' in their sin.
Strikes me the saints is out of place
  In this here world we 're in.

But when the call for volunteers
  Come roun' a second time,
An' stingy Johnson dropped his job
  An' hurried into line,
An' Bob that leads the Sunday choir,
  An' Jim that swears like— well,
I thinks, sez I, war ain't s' bad :
  It needs both Heaven and hell !

To fight a battle, so it seems,
  They need all kinds of stuff—
The " number one hard " and the " chaff,"
  The polished and the rough.
An' then my heart got keepin' time
  With many movin' feet,
An' somethin' sounded in my soul
  The band could never beat !

I watched em out of sight, an' heard
  A woman next me cry,
An' little babies call their dads,
  An' old men totter by
As pale as wax. " Lord, Lord," a voice
  I never heard before
Spoke up in me a-sayin', " Lord,
  Be with them boys at war!

" Be with them boys at war, O Lord,
An' help them wounded, who
Remains at home ; heal up their hearts,
Fur they 're a-bleedin' too.
I 'll never care—damn me to fire—
'T ain't *me* I 'm askin' for;
I don 't know how to pray good, Lord,
But help them boys at war! "

" Religion " ?—Well now, maybe 'twuz,
But 't did n't seem to be
The kind of stuff I 've listened to
When preachers preached to me;
Some gets religion—some patriotism;
An' them that 's bound to lag
An' fail in livin' for the *cross*
Can die to save the flag!

MRS. MURPHY AT CAMP

DIVIL a bit o' war there is;
  Ye can't phool me wid war!
Th' min and th' byes
Trow dhust in our eyes—
  That 's all this fussin 's far,
'T is ristless loike th' spahlpeens gets
  Wid wimmin folks an' wurruk,
An' campin roun' ferninst th' town
  'T is all their plan to shirruk.

Divil a bit o' war there is;
  Ah, ye can't phool me wid war!
Th' byes gets off wid thimselves to joke
An' curse, bedivil, an' dhrink an' shmoke ;
  Niver at all do Oi belave
  There 's a blessed bit o' war!

T h' pahpers—full o' their fussin' too—
  An' th' girruls don't see phat far;
Th' papers thim
'S all writ by min
  To phool us all th' more.
'Tis niver a sobbin' tear Oi 'l shid—
  An' me wid all th' wurruk!
Thim loafin' roun' their campin' ground—
  'T is all their plan to shirruk.

An' did I hear o' th' battle ? Shure.
  An' don't I see th' did,
An' th' wounded, too,
  As is comin' throu
Wid broken ligs an' hid?
  'T is plenty o' thim 'an' rist their souls—
But, Howly Mither! Pat,
  He 's many a noight brought home a soight
Wid wounds an' th' loikes o' that.

Divil a bit o' war there is;
  Phat 's all their fussin' far?
Th' byes gets off wid thimselves to joke
  An' curse, bedivil, an' dhrink an' shmoke;
Ah, ye can't phool me wid war!

PEACE

THE sword that leaped its scabbard cried,
  "Up, brother!" to the sword that lay
Beside him sheathed, serenely still;
  Then quoth the other sabre: "Nay,
Two kinds of courage, each as strong,
To all well-tempered steels belong;
Thine rises to the conflict — mine
Has strength the conflict to decline."
"Coward!" replied the other blade;
"My name is war, thou art afraid!"
"Bold butcher," smiled the calmer one,
"In thy defeat, my battle 's won!"

A HERO

DAN is the devil, so draft him in,
Brawny of arm, with fearless eyes.
What does it matter if Dannie dies?
One less loafer around the bar,
One less winner behind the screen
Where chips click over the velvet green,
The chips red, white, and blue—and here
Is the touch sincere of the insincere.
Born with the gift for a game or row,
Danny's the devil in peaceful times,
But Dan is the fellow about whom rhymes
Are written and sung when the bullets plow—
Danny, the devil—God bless him!

Think you the widows will mourn him long?
Dan is the devil to plague the girls.
Tall Celeste, with her bright bleached curls,
Sweet, shy Jessie, with earnest eyes,
Each believes that he loves her true,
Wearing his ribbon, red, white, and blue—
This is the way of the world—and here
Is the touch sincere of the insincere.
They weep such tears as for saints are shed,
For their love sincere, for him insincere.
Each calls on Heaven that it shall hear
Their passionate prayers for their hero dead.
For Danny, their hero—God rest him!

And only the angels know, perhaps,
Of this mourning mistress and grieving wife
Which grieves the greater. And this is life—
The inexpressible of the expressed:
The war of worlds and the war of hearts,
The cannon's missiles or passion's darts

The chips, the ribbons, the flag, in hue
That are one and the same, red, white, and blue;
The good and the bad man side by side,
Were their death pangs lesser or more, think you,
Where mangled and bleeding and riddled through
They lay in the path of the fire and died?
Oh, our heroes—God rest them! God bless them!

OUR ANSWER TO SPAIN

FETTER the wings of our eagle?
  Cover the flag with a pall—
The flag that is red
With the blood of our dead
And white with the flesh and starred with the eyes
  Of our soldiers and heroes all ?

Never! Go back to your regent
  Queen of the Bull-fight ring,
And say our reply
Will be heralded by
The lips of the waves and the winds of the sky
  In a war-storm's thundering!

For the souls of our murdered seamen
  Struck down in treachery,
For the bleaching bones
And the starving moans
In women's and children's plaintive tones,
  Invoke God's musketry.

And as from the blue-eyed heaven
  The lightning's scathing glare,
That follows the forming
Rumble of storming,
  Omniscience orders there,

So, born of our outraged patience,
  Our bleeding justice cries,
And we muster sons
And we load our guns
  To fight till our last foe dies.

War! War! Go back to your regent
  Queen of the Bull-fight ring,
And say our reply
Will be heralded by
The lips of the sea and the voice of the sky.
We will make no peace till for peace she cry,
  To our war storm's thundering!

THE RETURN FROM MANILA

I AM deaf, I am blind,
  But I hear a mighty sound.
'T is abroad on the wind,
  And afoot on the ground,
Like a storm's heavy roll!
'T is the storm in my soul,
And the sight in my mind,
  Of the boys coming home!

Is it thunder or drums
  That I hear day and night?
Or the tramp as it comes
  Of our sons from the fight?
Oh, can God be as glad
  Of a soul at His door
As the mothers whose boys
  Are returning from war?

Neither thunder nor drum
  Is the throb that I hear;
I am shaken and dumb
  As it pulses more near.
Over all as it rolls
Thrills this rally of souls—
'T is our hearts beating time
  With the boys marching home!

"BUNKIE" JIM

(Bunk-mate, or "Bunkie" in the soldiers' vernacular.)

MUSTERED out at Manila,
Left behind under sod,
Under sun, in the tropics,
But at home with his God!

Though the dust of the body
And the dust of the shore
Mingle far from his hearthstone—
Home at last, home once more!

While the drumbeats are throbbing,
And the footbeats go by,
And the heartbeats are timing
Every shout, every sigh,

Come the boys of the village
Marching back once again
To the scenes of their childhood,
Bearded, bronzed, fighting men.

There 's a gap in the column,
There 's a space, void and bare,
And a pause in the music—
"Bunkie Jim" is n't there!

There's a voice choked in cheering,
And a thought dead with him,
There 's a beat dropped in drumming,
"Bunkie Jim"— "Bunkie Jim"!

Mustered out at Manila,
  Left behind under sod,
Under sun, in the tropics,
  But at home with his God.

Do you think, brother comrade,
  We who live do not care
That in peace' daily battles
  " Bunkie Jim" is n't there?

DEFORMED

DEFORMED in body — who would turn away
  Save those who have not hand, heart, purse to give?
Deformed in body, stumbling on his way
  Or fumbling with one arm for means to live;
Ah, quick comes aid or sympathy for men
By fate made helpless children once again!
  Yet lightly look you on your own fair kind,
Nor give a thought nor lend a kindly love
  To those who daily live deformed in mind,
  Lame, stunted, feeble, crooked, deaf, and blind
Of spirit. Fools! You even give a shove
  To speed them downward, or you turn aside
  To nurse contempt or pamper selfish pride,
Yourself too blind to see your spirit stands
Fumbling to feed its greed, with crippled hands!

ÉTUDE UNIQUE

ON the blazing hearth of the western sky
  The earth lies large and gray.
Up leaps the flare of the flame on high,
  Long shadows stretch away
Across still fields, and the flowers nod
  As though to yawn, on the carpet sod.

The blazing hearth grows less and dull,
  And the earth—a huge gray cat—
Seems breathing low in soft content
  On the Summer's silken mat.
See the softening twilight's maltese fur,
  And hark, how the echoing thickets purr!

MAGIC

HAVE you heard of the tale of the maiden fair
Who wore a comb in her golden hair,
A *silver* comb, that was wrought most rare?

And was it a day, or a year, or years,
A trick of time or a test of tears?
The time or reason be as it may,
It seems to me it was yesterday
That sudden and softly I rubbed my eyes
And gazed upon her in sad surprise,
For all her locks in their golden dome
Had changed to silver to match her comb!

Now all fair maidens be warned—take care!
Set *golden* combs in your *golden* hair,
Lest through such magic your sunny curls
Be changed to silver—as this poor girl's !

CITY DWELLERS

WE live together, side by side;
God gave to men their brotherhood
That each in each they might confide,
Consoled in being understood.
On whirl the days — our modern lives
So full of fret not much survives
Of heart, or health, or wealth to spare
That we may with our neighbor share.

We live together, side by side;
We sleep and eat and laugh and chaff
With but a shallow shield between,
A hastily constructed screen.
We hear each other through the walls
The feet that patter, doors that close,
The cry of grief or pain that rose
A moment on the ear, then falls
And all is still. The instrument
Played every day in some new mood—
Now stumbling, fumbling, gay or rude,
Or dreamy, tenderly intent,
The player's repertoire well known;
And when a stranger's fingers touch
The little keys we hear so much,
However they rejoice or moan
To us the incident is known.
And yet—'t was June our neighbors came,
And we have never known their name!

We live together, side by side;
And side by side we die—and lie.
O God, be *Thou* more neighborly:
Lean down to us, or lift us near,
Because we have no neighbors here!

THE HUMAN BROOM

A BUSY thrifty, *human broom*
Swept all before her—every room
Was subjugated to her sway
And owned her queen of sweeping day.
No time for sentiment—to sit
Through twilight moment's dreamy train,
" She 'd have no cobwebs in her brain!"
Imagination might not spin
Bright threads of fragile fancying,
For scrub she would and brush she must.
So, waging warfare with the dust,
On whatsoever way she went
She always found her element.
Shoo, Poetry! take your rhymes, make room—
The advent of the human broom!
So outraged Art and Science ran;
Society caught up her fan,
And held her nose, and here and there
Fled, pleading for a breath of air.
The children snatched their toys, or cried
To have their dishes set aside;
But all in vain—from room to room
Pursued the unrelenting broom!

Fate swept life's path at last, one day,
And brushed the human broom away.
Worn with her energetic trust
From dust she passed again to dust.

Her weapons, plied by bungling hands,
Made protest with the carpet-lands
But feebly. Sentiment came home
And Science need no longer roam.
But somehow, each neglected room
Seemed slack without the human broom,
And in the irksome stillness then
They missed, and wished her back again;
For Art and Science would not budge,
And Sentiment refused to drudge,
Forgetting former scorn to flaunt,
Since "ill to have," was "worse to want"—
Regretting God, in Heaven, made room
And welcome for the human broom.

THE DANDELION MINER

WITH finger-roots I delve the earth:
  Deep, deep I dig the clay,
Till, with the Spring's rejoicing mood,
  Up my small shaft my way
I haste in swift retreat, and hold
In triumph high, my nugget gold!

THE LAMP

I AM the lamp that stands aside
  Upon a table half described.
The other lamp across the way
Gives light at night that they may play
Upon the instrument; it wears
A shade of rosy silk—who cares?
Not I, not I a single bit,
Though I, alas, am never lit!

I am the lamp they never light;
I stand and hold by day and night
My darkened shade, yet none could tell
But that they treat me just as well.
I know that I could shine as fair
As does my rosy sister there,
But lights however bright they be
Must have an opportunity!

Heart—heart of mine that will not glow
As other happy hearts I know,
Where is the flame my life's long dark
Shall brighten with its glowing spark?
I play my part and none can tell
But love has favored me as well
As others; yet, God knows my plight—
I am a lamp without a light!

PRAYER

O Thou, in this earth's Autumn,
Though out of season,
Yet my thoughts blossom unto Thee.
Nature is dying,
But my spirit is in birth.
I yearn in prayer upward,
Oh, forsake not the forsaken!
O Thou perennial, faithful in change,
My soul flowers unto Thee!
Blight it not!

THE LION TAMER

WITH lions in the ring he stood,
Commanding-cool, unarmed, alone;
Played with the fire of their claws,
Laughed with his head between their jaws,
While shouts commingled with applause.

Yet the wild passions of his soul
He never held in strong control,
But daily cringed and shrank before
Their fierce and unrelenting roar.
He knew himself a coward, though
The crowd, the lions, did not know.

TO AN OLD RUSSIAN IRON TREASURE CHEST

OLD ancient chest, so strong, so rudely rugged,
All interlined with labyrinthian, crude
Contrivances, to baffle fingers rude
And curious. To shield your treasures even
From men's molesting thoughts, like prowling robbers!
Old jailer of strange secrets safely hid
By lock and key beneath your iron lid,
How heaped with precious confidences full!
Your metal bosom must have ached for easing,
To yield its tenseness, to confide its contents
Like some brown priest whose iron vows of office
Made him repository of joys and sorrows
And the sins of kingdoms, till God lifted upward
The lid of life and the burden from his spirit.
Old chest, mysterious, grimly reticent, stolid
You stand, a creature of romantic past
Whose history was lived, not sung nor written,
So that the generations following after
With questions, like inquisitive Pandoras,
Besiege your sphynx-like silence and fall baffled;
Too time-tried, aged, to give forth reminiscence
If give you could—for you are deaf and dumb
And blind, tho' sturdy stands your earthly tenement,
Singly surviving centuries of inroads,
Whose days, dissolved, are lost as a lover's dreaming.
Venerable, ugly relic, surviving beauty
Or use,—ah, had I the keys to unlock your history!

ONE COMFORT

WHEN Paw hurries, everything's
Jus' upset fur all the day;
Seems like nothin' can't be done
Without gittin' in his way.
Maw gits all het up in a flurry
Every critter has to scurry,
Malcolm says he jus' can't curry
Good, nor harness up the surrey
Without swarin' all aroun'—
Just' wisht Paw would quiet down!

Hurry, an' th' baby cries.
Paw, he scolds about th' flies,
Dangs the weather, jaws an' sweats,
Says how everyone forgets
'Cept hisself; that crops is failin',
Nothin' left to cut but swalin';
Says we all don't lift a han'
While he 's slavin' with the lan'
Like a dog, and Maw 'd go buyin'
Finery while he was dyin';
Steps on Tabby, kicks the dog,
An' fergits to feed the hog!
My! 't Jus' drives Maw into worry
When Paw takes a mind to hurry!
Everybody 's got to trot
'Ceptin' Paw—he talks a lot
More 'n he moves! There 's only one

Comfort when he's said an' done
Fur a kid like me an' Jimmie
Gittin' off to school: Paw gimme
Leaf to save my shoes an' go
Barefoot, 'cause it 's rainin' so!

AT SLEEPING

DEAR heart, good-night—
The sail is set
Which bears me far from thee,
And voyaging in dreams I leave
The day's reality
To softly sojourn where afar
I moor my spirit to a star.

Good-night, Good-night!
Should I in sleep
Pass out of life to death—
If snapped the fleeting ectasy
Which leases life with breath—
Thy love within my memory,
Hell never can be hell to me,
And Heaven were only Heaven if there
God's angels all, thy visage wear.

THE VICTOR

WITHHOLD no offering of cheer
  From any famous man.
The laurel binds the brow, but art
Alone can never brim the heart,
Love only fills its span ;
Too often where the victor stands
Defeated joy wrings hopeless hands.

Withhold no offering of praise
  Where triumph you have known;
For even though the highest peak
The utmost azure heaven seek,
Its summit stands alone,
All crowned by gleaming snows, and great,
Among its kind most desolate;
Too high for sweet companionship
Of toiling ants and bees;
Too far above the butterflies
To share their ectasies;
No verdure veils its barrrenness,
No birds sing lullabies
To soothe the lofty loneliness;
  Stars only may appraise;
Too isolate from humble hives,
  Too far above the sod
To feel the brotherhood of man,
  Too low to talk with God.

THE FIREFLY

NOW you flash your wealth of gold
For our fascinated eyes,
Now 'tis gone—where? how? The skies
In muffled dark are rolled;
Then again before our eyes
Gleam the golden fireflies.

Now your wealth is shining poured—
Riches lavishly you give;
Spendthrift, who the while you live
Lend, a moment, all your hoard,
Miserly to snatch again
What you flaunted first to men!

Rogue—counterfeiter—flying sprite,
Lead us to the magic, deep
Mine from which these moneys peep,
Coined and squandered every night.
Swagger not so high and far,
No one thinks you are a star!

What 's the penalty to pay?
Why have prisons exempted you?
Wretch, who shuns the morning's view,
Thief who stole your light from day!
Like a modern Mercury,
Sandal-shod with living light—
Like the soul of Circe, tossed
And tortured in the tomb of night!

Thou silent wonder! I abuse,
Blame, or scorn you—can it be,
Though a hollow mockery,
You are not what I accuse?
Not a miser, spendthrift, elf,
Rogue, or little classic ghost,
But a prestidigitator—
Summer's harmless, laughing boast!

THE SONG OF YOUTH

THE sun is awake in the cradle of day,
And the new-born life is fair,
And joy cries loud from the lark in the cloud,
And pure is the perfect air !
Oh, open your petal lips, my rose,
And sing with your perfumed tongue,
For every dawning is day made new,
And all the world is young!

With bees in the verdure and birds in the blue,
And nectar in every flower,
A languishing star that still lingers for you
With the heaven's first flush of power,
With love in the earth and air, my dear,
And laughter, like matins sung,
The soul is reborn with each day, and life—
Ah, life is forever young !

TO H. H.

ONE came to me in sore distress of mind.
I put impulsive hands in hers, and said
Such few strong words as I had power to find
In pause from duty where it urgent led,
Then said adieu; we never met again.
I striving live, she, striving, died in pain;
Yet on a friendly lip came back to me
A gentle message from her silent grave
To lift my spirit from despondency
And thank me for the comfort that I gave.
Strange life and love: in death she 'd not forgot
The words which I to-day remember not!

A MOTHER SONG

THERE is laughter in the twilight
  And a tinkling of guitar,
There is lisping in the leafage,
  And a knowing winking star
Peeps upon me from the heaven,
  While a crooning cricket calls,
And a dew as soft as kisses
  On my cheeks and forehead falls.
What have I to do with these?
  Light love, gay youth?
I am old and I am cold,
My romance is past and told!

Nay, my heart has found its spring
  In the winter of my years.
There is youth for me again—
  Why should I repine in tears?
If my hair is gray and thin
  Half my heart is sweet sixteen
With my son a bonny king,
  And my lass a lovely queen—
My romance relives in these.
  Light love, gay love!
Never old and never cold
While new human buds unfold!

THE TOOL

BEWARE who bungles with a blade
Or trifles with a flame!
For what thou wieldest shapes in turn
Its fate and thine, and will but learn
Within thy service how to be
Deft deputy of thy destiny.

CHILDLESS

THE fruit trees flower fragrantly,
The air is full of bees,
The tulips flaunt their crowns of flame,
And soon the garden close
Will yield her lily-ecstasies,
And thorns will boast their rose.
Oh, satisfied, supreme desire!
The yearning root that claims its flower,
When pallid sap leaps floral fire,
And waiting wonder knows its hour,
I am denied—it is my doom
To grow, to leaf, but never bloom!

How have the hearts that live and love
Immortalized their happy creeds,
Their kisses and their vows? Behold
The living language of their thoughts,
The human harvest of their deeds:
Their future lives, and life is wrought
For time's eternal purposes.
Alas for them that never flower!
No children cluster round their knees;
Their sterile souls put forth no power;
There is no cradle in their tomb,
They grow and thrive, but never bloom!

THE GRAVE OF SUMMER

THE grave of Summer—hast thou been
To that sad place?
Not where the seasons' petals fall
Beneath the Autumn's cloudy pall,
And languid zephyrs die of frost,
Stabbed mortally by bitter blades,
Or pallid sunbeams peer through glades,
Where dry stalks shiver in chill shades,
And nests, deserted by the flight
Of birds, lie lonely, day and night.

The grave of Summer is not here—
Though this were called the season's bier;
But standing with a weary breast
Where my belovèd lies at rest,
To know my arms shall never hold
Again what senseless clods enfold—
Dear God! How utter bleak and drear
The grave of Summer—it is here!

AT TWILIGHT

WHEN trees at twilight, silhouette
Against the sky, moss agates seem,
Then memory shows
Its cameos
Cut clearly on dull fields of dream.
The present's diamond moments gleam
In prismic glory, gold on rose;
Prose cons her brilliants, ray by ray,
But Poetry counts her cameos!

Quaint, delicately fair they are,
These pearly profile-thoughts that rise
Carved on our hearts
By Time's slow arts,
With beauty such as never dies.
Youth scorns, but age soon learns to prize
The priceless joys reflection knows;
Yields to the heedless brighter gems,
To pride and pomp the diadems,
And gathers at the lifetime's close
Its twilight memories—cameos!

THE VEIL

ACROSS the infant's face, we lay a veil.
Too tender is the flower for this world's winds,
Too fresh from Paradise to brave the air
Of lesser regions, and of sights less fair;
So o'er the infant's face we lay a veil.

Across the maiden's cheek, she draws a veil.
Ah, sweet suggestion—to uplift this frail,
Rare, gauze-enchantment, and the blush beneath
To drink with eyes, as lips drink rosy wine!
Across the maiden's cheek behold a veil!

Across the bridal brow, we lay a veil—
Sweet emblem of unwakened maidenhood,
Of modesty untouched by knowledge's power,
As petals closed about a waking flower—
Across the bridal brow we lay a veil.

Across the brow of mourning, lay a veil.
Too deep, too sacred are the eyes that wail
With looks like outcries, and the lips that pray
With quivering muteness. As the dying day
Obscures its throes in shadow, so the pale
Stained cheek of sorrow reverently veil.

God lays a veil across the face of life,
That what is harshest may enchanted seem,

And what is tenderest, half veiled in dream,
May to our lesser vision look more fair.
Veiled in her mists all earthly beauty dawns,
And veiled in cloud the heaven's utmost light
In pearls of vapor every day departs;
Through shadow shines the loveliness of night;
And so through life the veil of mystery
Lends charm to all things, from the infant breath,
Through every phase of beauty and of time,
And still a tender secret makes of death;
Across eternity God lays a veil!

A FANTASY IN TWO PHASES

"OH, tell me what you think", she said—
I looked away to distant hills.
Too bitter were my thoughts to tell,
Like tears one cannot shed in hell,
Where grief is dry and sorrows burn,
Where pain is mute, and hopeless yearn.
How could I speak my bitter pain
When all its anguish were in vain?—
Not least of all that she should say
"What do you think?" to me, that day,
That moment—while I could but reel,
Dear God! nor *think* at all, but *feel!*

"Ah, tell me what it is you feel"—
She raised eyes questioning to mine
And asked me.—Years and years had passed
Since that wild hour, that bitter day,
When last we walked and talked so gay;
And now the words I longed to hear
In days departed met my ear,
But time-accustomed misery
Had callous habit worn in me.
I calmly heard "What do you feel?"
Alas, my spirit did not reel
Or tremble: I could only shrink
And say, "I do not *feel*, I *think!*"

OPPORTUNITY

MY sails full set, I wait the wind,
My hatches fast, my cargo safe,
And heart aleap, desires full ripe,
My strength at utmost—muscles—mind.
Fate, I am ready, call me forth!
Where stirs the breath to voyage me?
Wake, winds that sleep in yonder cloud,
And blow your best, and sing aloud,
Wake love and opportunity!

I wait and wait; the days sail by—
Their freight the fortunes of my friends.
My neighbor-crafts bear out of sight,
And sailing bask in sea and sky,
To harbor in the lovely isles
Of happiness, fame, or to be
Dashed thrilling on wild passion's coast,
To drown as in salt tears, in sea—
Give me my fortune or my fate!
Come love, come opportunity!

A gale! A gale! My pulses leap;
I long to try my strength, and far
From shallow shoal or sheltered bay
To battle with the daring deep.
Ah, grief to be becalmed and still,
While brother barks put forth to sea,

And gray gulls all unfettered fly
In freedom over surf and sky:
My God—for opportunity!

The song-bird with a broken wing
Must watch its brothers in their flight;
Its spirit follows, but alone
It needs must linger sorrowing.
The cloud, pierced by the mountain's freak,
Melts, while its wind-blown brothers flee;
And while the leaves of Autumn race
The oak leaves linger on the tree
And perish lonely—such am I;
Ah, life! Oh, opportunity!

Must death, not love, unloose this chain
That moors me to a placid fate?
Must dreams alone my travels be,
And hopes deferred my empty freight?
Take back your pity, brothers mine;
I strike my heart-strings—echo me
Ye wayward winds, and you shall ring
The free, far-flying songs I sing:
My art, my opportunity!

THE TWO CHARIOTS

"HUT up there! Grandma, go away—
You must n't look and spoil our play.
We 're driving for our lives—the wheels
Are whirling dust along the road,
Wild Indians are at our heels!
I crack the whip across the bay
And running roan, and—Go away!
It all is spoiled when you laugh—
We 're driving in the empty dray!"

"We 're driving in the empty dray"—
How many years ago it seems!
But often now, in happy dreams,
We mount the seat and gravely play—
The same barn odors from the mow,
The corn husks, and the chickens' eyes
In feathered hoods that from the door
Look at us in supreme surprise;
The moth-worn felt, the downy dust,
Years-standing, on the steps and floor;
The hinges with rheumatic rust,
The rotten straps and broken door,
The wild, war-painted, savage crew
That (in our fancy) rush behind;
The robins in the apple trees,
Our timely rescue (in our mind),

The laughing, wrinkled, ruddy dame,
A worsted cape around her head,
The old hair breast-pin at her throat,
And in her hand an apple, red.

Fame's gilded coach and Pegasus?
"No, thank you, no; some other day.
I 'm unavoidably engaged—
I 'm driving in the empty dray!"

THE SLEEPING CHILD

SO sleepy is the baby
  The stars from out the skies
Look down and blink and wink and nod
  A-drowse, in paradise.
The sun gave one great, golden yawn
  And stretched his tongue of red;
The shadows spread like velvet paws
  Where he had made his bed.

So sleepy seemed the baby
  The sun awoke to see
If she were *really* sleeping—
  A playful witch is she!
The stars came back next evening
  To take another peep,
Then fell again to napping,
  For all that wakes must sleep.

But nothing wakes the baby,
  Who sleeps so sound and still,
Though all the other children
  Sob *softly*, lest *they* will.
So peaceful sleeps the baby,
  With roses round her head—
We draw the green earth over her
  And tip-toe from her bed.

ELAINE

SO far—so far—not as we measure miles,
The distance on the map, by land or sea,
The depth of earth, the width or breadth of air,
Oh, not so far as Egypt is from Dee,
Nor yet aloof as hangs the planet Mars,
Is my star distant from its star of stars,
And yet, dear God, how utter far from me!
Is there no pity in this cold, vast world,
For tender longing and for hopeless love?
Life cannot span the breach—although my breath
Last night sighed mutely, as it touched his cheek.
O to outdistance selfish hopelessness!
That I might bless him with impersonal joy
As God can bless and love the pure in heart;
For full of gentle nobleness is he
Who is so very near and dear to me,
And yet so far! Oh, lonely is my lot,
Nor life nor death avail—he loves me not.

THE SONG OF THE SAGE

OUR thoughts are the roots of the mind,
Our deeds are its flowers—
Will you cultivate weeds to o'errun
Time's trellis of hours?
Rank, perfumeless weeds looked upon
By the world and the sun!

Our deeds are the flowers of our life.
Fill your lifetime with rose,
With the lily and violet blooms;
Fill your lifetime, your close,
That the history fame has not known
God shall breathe as perfumes;

That your death may be sweet and serene
As the death of time's years,
And your dust with the dust of your grave
Shall add ripples to green, as a wave
To an ocean of land; and sweet tears,
Tears of tenderness, love, and regret
Shall fall from fond eyes as pure dew,
While the heaven, as the earth, shall be proud
To make welcome for you.

A MESSAGE

I am still here, who died.
  Still am I at your side,
In earth and heaven—see
The elements of me!
In every flower's face
My likeness you can trace.
In every voice you hear
A note I spoke once clear;
In all *my like*, that grows,
That flashes, flutters, glows,
To sight, taste, hearing, touch,
In all I loved so much,
I live—nay, do not start—
I live within *your* heart!
Do you not feel me here,
Who died—but am still near?

THE ART OF LIVING

PAINT, write, carve, play, and sing
Or dramatize, O men,
'T is all but one grand thing
Expressed again;
And if life still seems hell—
Complain? Nay, do not pause
Upbraiding—all is well;
Go, *live* art's laws!

THE DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN

THE first-born beauty of the Spring
  Is blushing into being,
The birds are glad to spread the news,
The herald clouds are fleeing;
The dandelions stare surprise
To greet the splendor of the skies
The where the sun, heaven's flowering gold,
Its shining petals has unrolled.

Why, heart of mine, so sadly slow
To wake in sympathetic glow?
Ah, hast thou seen last season pass,
Seen all the petals on the grass,
Seen all the grass turn brown and sear,
The birds depart, clouds reappear,
The blossoms die, the heaven's gold
Fade into pallor, dull and cold?
'T is so, yet surely as it dies
Hast thou not seen all this *arise?*
"Ah, but," my heart cries, "tell me when
Love's springtime will return again,
The first-born of my heart that died
In all its lovely being";
My ears are eager for the news,
My thoughts are ever fleeing
To distance grief; the splendid skies,

So shining, mock my blighted eyes
The where hope's sun-flower withered, *old*,
No more unfolds its shining gold.
Though all the earth is in its Spring,
The Spring of love it cannot bring!

TERPSICHORE

SWEET dancer, deft, delicious artist, you
Who sculpture motion to a moment's statue,
Till I who gaze would seem to see not one,
But twenty marbles flashing parian
From your lithe limbs!

O dancer, following through soft sequences
The progress of expression, till you seem
Some human flower growing in a dream,
Your fluttering rosy robes like petals bloom
And fade in one swift instant down the gloom:
You leave the eye so much enriched, the ear,
Grown jealous, has refused its offices!
What was the tune you trod to? Hush! it seems
As though the only music I could hear
The while you danced, so softly, swiftly near,
Was in my breast—ah, maiden, do not start;
You danced the mighty measure of my heart!

A MINSTREL'S LAY

O THAT you would but let me sing
For joy, dear life!
O that you would but let me sing
Of rapture, not of sorrowing,
The major, not the minor string—
Life, strange life!

But with some fierce and fatal force,
Some law that seems
Not justice meet, but cruel jest,
My peep o' sun, my joy o' dreams
No more than warms my heart and tongue
Than it is gone, and cruel gleams
The lightning-blade I took to be
A sunbeam's gentler ecstasy.

Oh, weary, weary is my soul
For great, glad chords
That rounded roll
From laughter's throat,
And smiles that coin
A mint of sunshine
Mote by mote;
Yield to the jesters, my heart's mood!
No more shall grief on shadows brood

Then hear, oh, hear me! Soul, upspring
In joy of life!
And help, sweet love, my lips to sing
Of rapture, not of sorrowing,
The major, not the minor string—
An ounce of joy, a pound of pain;
Yet would I voice rejoicing's strain
With lusty lungs in glad refrain,
Good life, great life!

THE MUMMY

A LITTLE box contains a faded rose,
Dry, withered wreck of bygone loveliness,
Crisp, sapless body, wound with crumpled leaves,
Beneath this lid on which are simply scrolled
These words that tell so much of joys untold,
"Died—Passion—in the June of '85."
That seems a strange name to have borne, alive
Or dead—ah, will no pallid ghost arise
To whisper what it may of memories?
I faintly scent a fragrance lurking here
Which hints of kisses born of love that blooms
To ripeness on red lips with youth perfumed;
I dream of eyes whose very looks embraced,
And thrilling fingers softly interlaced,
Long hours of moonshine squandered with delight,
And days that brought no parting from the night,
That only warmed the seeds of joy, to spring
At nighttime once again, in blossoming;
And then, ah grief! as winter time drew near
I feel a chill like death's, while in my ear
" Died—Passion—in a June of long ago,"
I softly, like a lazy echo, hear.

Dry, withered wreck of bygone loveliness,
Dead rose within thy shroud of shrunken leaves,

Link of love's broken chain, I love thee so!
Close to my longing lips I softly press
Thee, and the vision of the loveliness
Of one whose season, like your own, is o'er,
Whose memory lives, whose soul has gone before.

TO MY FRIENDS

BEAUTY and youth shall wane,
  Pleasure and power shall pall,
Passion and love prove vain,
Duty a dreary thrall;
But friendship, friendship tenderly true,
Through all life's losses I cling to you,
And death shall grant me I have my fill,
Who lose *my life*, but have friendship still.

SWEETHEART

TO tell thee how I love thee,
My beautiful, my sweet,
I needs must learn a language
With softness more replete.
Pluck thou a star from heaven,
A pearl from out the sea,
And melt them into meaning,
Then I might tell it thee.

To tell thee how I love thee,
O spirit of my soul,
I 'd rob the world of rapture,
Past—present—future—whole!
My love no thought can measure,
Nor any lips can tell—
It hath the height of heaven,
It dares the depths of hell.

A DRINKING SONG

THE heaven 's a drinking cup,
Drink, drink the windy wine!
The vintage of the ripened stars,
Spilled by the gods, the revellers,
Upon earth's thirsting lip,
The vintage of the ripened stars!
See that thou lose no sip—
Drink! Drink!

The heart 's a loving cup
That flows a crimson wine,
In youth's sweet vintage-years.
Drink, drown in joy all fears,
And at the lips' sweet rim
Life's happiest harvest reap,
Where ripened kisses brim—
Drink! Drink!

The mind 's a thinking cup
In which our thoughts, like fruit,
Are pressed to reason's wine.
Ah, reason, truth divine,
From thee pure deeds shall spring
To soulful vintage time!
I pledge thee as I sing,
I praise thee as I rhyme—
A health! Drink!

CIRCE

I KNOW two white volcanoes,
  Whose slopes are clad in snow,
And wrapped in virgin coldness
  Their mountain marbles show,
While on their peaks are burning
  Twin ruby, restless fires
That throb with throes of passion
  And treacherous desires.

Ah, pilgrim-thought, be wary,
  For many have aspired
To gain these heights so lofty,
  Have striven and desired;
But those that nearest ventured
  Life lost and crushed, their breath
Consumed by flames that froze them,
  And snows white-heat with death.

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